

NSC BRIEFING

12 November 1953

YUGOSLAV~~IA~~ AND ITALY^{AN} POSITIONS
ON RECENT TRIESTE DEVELOPMENTS

- I. Atmosphere in Trieste remains tense although no disorders have occurred since 7 November.
 - A. US officials in Trieste warn that any weakness in face of violence could easily lead to a situation approaching revolution, Italian and Yugoslav armed intervention, and virtual certainty of war.
 - B. Foreign Minister Popovic has warned that "if events follow their present course the Yugoslav government will be obliged to intervene to protect the Yugoslav ethnic group in Zone A."

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II. Trieste riots have hardened the respective attitudes of both Yugoslavia and Italy with respect to the implementation of the 8 October decision.

A. American Charge Wallner in Belgrade believes that the Trieste demonstrations have removed any possibility that the Yugoslav government will accept a proposal for the transfer of any functions whatsoever to Italy.

B. Yugoslavia has proposed to US and UK ambassadors in Belgrade that an emergency five-power ambassadorial meeting be called to consider various points of view on Trieste question in order to arrive at an agenda for a formal conference. By calling for such an emergency conference,

Yugoslavia hopes:

1. To avoid discussions based on fixed agenda linked to 8 October decision, and
2. To avoid further compromise of position in Trieste by beginning talks before actual implementation of 8 October can be started.

C. Yugoslavia has withheld public announcement of proposals "for a time" on advice US and British heads-of-mission in Belgrade.

1. It may choose to publish the proposals should further disorders erupt.
2. In any case, Belgrade will probably attempt to use the threat of publication as an ace-in-the-hole to exert further pressure upon the United States and

Britain.

III. In Italy, Premier Pella used the riots to make another demand for early implementation of the 8 October declaration, threatening resignation if his demands were ignored.

A. In Italy, as in Trieste itself, popular feeling was directed primarily against the British as responsible for the actions of the Trieste police.

1. Pella requested the American embassy to have General Winterton, British commander of Zone A, replaced by an American.

B. Pella, though denying to Ambassador Luce that the Trieste disorders were staged by pro-government forces, is evidently interested in keeping the situation stirred up and hoping to gain concessions as a result.

1. He told Ambassador Luce on 7 November that the Trieste riots would make it much more difficult for Italy to attend a five-power conference on Trieste.
2. He again insisted that Italian police must first be permitted at least to share in control of Trieste police. He said refusal by the United States and Britain would 'risk a fundamental change in pro-Western Italian public opinion."

3. On 6 November the Italian General Staff told the American embassy that two Italian divisions have been alerted for movement to Yugoslavia border and that certain police detachments were being prepared for the occupation of Zone A.
4. On 10 November the Italian Foreign Ministry emphasized to the American Embassy that Italy could not attend even a preliminary five-power meeting of experts unless some implementation of the 8 October declaration had first been carried out.
- C. On several occasions during the past month Pella has threatened resignation.

1. On 7 November, telling Ambassador Luce that the Trieste shootings had made his position "almost unmanageable," he said he had given President Einaudi his resignation the previous day but that Einaudi had refused to accept it.
- D. In fact, Pella will almost certainly resign if he fails to win a prompt solution which in the eyes of the Italian public would approximate the 8 October decision.
- E. His resignation under these circumstances would increase Italian political instability and further strengthen the left and right extremes at the expense of the center, thereby weakening Italy's pro-Western policy.